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SENTIMENTAL REMARKS,

SELECTED FROM ANTIQUITY,



BONDAGE AND LIBERTY,

RELATIVE TO THE

LAW OF MARRIAGE,

By JAMES POULSON.

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The Author is under particular obligations to the Public, for the honor they have conferred upon him, by their encouraging the publication of his Numbers; and begs leave to acquaint his Readers, that he has a Manuscript of the memorable Occurrences in the course of his Travels, in a tour of Nine Years in *Ireland*, and a visit to *Scotland*, including sundry Remarks during his residence in *Wales*; if they should be disposed to encourage the Publication by subscribing towards the expence attending it, the Author will complete the work in Three Sixpenny Numbers; to be delivered to Subscribers Monthly at Sixpence each. Subscriptions are taken in by the Author at *Strood, Kent.*

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In my former Numbers I undertook to follow my Accusers step by step, in the progress of their Accusations; and many of my readers, I know, will hardly excuse me, if I dismiss them without a little more chastisement for their unsufferable insolence: but, on account of my years, it may not be amiss to take a little respite from this toil, that I may be able to encounter them, if any of them should presume to summon me again to the bar of the Public. They express a *reflex* disposition to involve and encounter with me at Law: They know I have neither *money* nor *disposition* to engage with them in Law; but I am ready, always ready, to encounter with them and the whole fraternity of their *teachers*, in the cause of Truth, and in the Defence of my injured Reputation! They have, like *cowardly* fools, been firing without an Adversary, at an aged Stranger in the *eve of life*; and who, at their request, assisted them in the Ministry, and delivered a weekly Lecture to them for the space of *six* months, without money and without price; but, on account of the very ill treatment I met with from them, I discontinued my services and all my connections with them. And, on the 20th of January, 1792, as a *requital* for my services, they summoned a company together of *false-witnesses*, who laid things to my charge that I know not of; thus they triumphed *without* a victory. One would think their consciences must feel an alarming shock!

As this Number contains the *only* accusation that has the appearance of truth, I will admit it, and state the case to the discerning Public, with the precedent which I shall assign for my conduct.

I have been censured and condemned by R. H-ll and M. W-lks as an *apostate* and a *Nicolaitan*; but

I deny

I deny their mean and pitiful declamation, and I defy them to prove their malicious accusation. I shall offer my thoughts on *Bondage and Liberty*, relative to the *Law of Marriage*, and submit the decision of my conduct to abler Judges. I confess it is a delicate subject, and no one can enter upon such a tender theme with more reluctance than myself; but my wicked Adversaries have drawn me to it; and that I may not give offence to persons of the strictest modesty, either Jew or Gentile, I desire to maintain an incessant dependance on the unerring wisdom of an *infallible teacher*, that my thoughts may be influenced, and my pen directed, by that wisdom which cometh *from above*, that I may neither pervert nor disguise the truth by misrepresentation, nor disguise it by an immodest, unchristian disposition and temper.

In the beginning of the year 1754, as near as I can recollect, I married a person of a respectable family and fortune, without any advantage to myself nor loss to the person I married; by whom I had two Daughters: We lived but a few years together ere an irreconcilable alienation of affection took place in both parties, which delicacy forbids to divulge, and a separation took place.—I removed to London, where I taught a school, and occasionally assisted Dr. Gifford in the Ministry, and other churches in and near London upwards of seven years. Now and then she made me a visit there, and, at her pleasure, she withdrew herself: and, to gratify Capt. B—w, I will suppose it was my *peevish* and *overbearing* temper might have been the cause of her departure from me; but depart she did, and of her own choice, and sometimes without my knowledge. It is one thing for a man to put away his wife, and another thing for the wife to depart from her husband.

In the year 1770, I embarked for *Ireland*, where I was cordially received, and respectfully treated; and, if praise be due for hospitality, or if noble generosity claim any distinction, the people of Ireland stand foremost on the list of fame. I owe them a tribute of respect, and I will cheerfully and gratefully repay it:

Such favors from them I have met,  
Twould be ungrateful to forget.

In the beginning of the year 1780, I returned to *England*; and terms of accommodation and reconciliation between me and my wife were proposed and tried, but to no effect; and, by her own deliberate choice and approbation, a final deed of separation and *Divorce* was mutually concluded upon by both parties, and signed, sealed, and delivered, in the presence of several witnesses; with a *bond* given to me by her *Trustee* of *One Thousand Pounds*, duly executed for the true performance of the above divorce, leaving each other to their own choice, to live single or to marry, at their pleasure: Which deed may be seen at my house by any person.

When this business was executed, I considered myself at *liberty* and *free*; and, as the *Laws* of *Men* are puzzling and intricate, and withall very extravagant, I charged my conscience again and again, to appeal to the *law of God*, to the *law of my mind*, and to the *law* and to the *testimony* I made my appeal; and now and then I consulted the *antient customs* of the *Jewish fathers* in such cases, and perused the profane customs of some of the *heathen nations* and their *petty gods*; but my principal resource was to the *antient records* of *sacred history*, which has the noble sanction of the *seven princes of Persia and Media*, who saw the King's face, and who sat first in the kingdom, relative to a similar case, when *Vashti*, the queen, refused to comply with the King's request; the King, disgusted at her obstinacy and disobedience, enquired of his wise men, who knew *Law* and

*Judgement*,

Judgement, what should be done to the queen *Vandal* according to Law for such insult? The result was, that she come no more before the King, and that another be substituted in her room; and it was written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes that it be not altered; and some of the ablest writers think the Apostle Paul had reference to this affecting piece of sacred history when he uttered the words, 1 Cor. ch. viii. v. 15. *If the unbelieving depart let him depart, a brother or sister is not in bondage in such cases.* These passages of sacred history, attested by inspired writers, and holy men of old, who could not mistake, was a sufficient authority for my conduct. Perhaps Mr. H—ll and Mr. W—lks are not aware that there is such a passage in Paul's writings, or in the book of God; but let them search the scriptures, and examine these passages with due deliberation. Perhaps they will exclaim against the Apostle Paul as they did against me, and say, he was a *Nicolaitan* and an *Apostate*. Poor creatures! they are proud not knowing anything, and have a deal of vehemence and fire and intemperate zeal!

I appeal to the judicious and impartial reader, whether, if after fifteen years situation, and every experiment made to reclaim her conduct, and a Divorce or a final separation was preferred by her, he would not think himself justified in marrying again? I was fully persuaded in my own conscience of the equity of my procedure; and I candidly related my situation to Mrs. Holbrook and to the family on my first visit, and left my deeds of Divorce in her hands for their perusal, and for her Counsellor's opinion; and my marriage was judged justifiable and legal; and it was solemnized by a licence in St. James's church in the city of *Bristol*; and, if it had been *illegal*, I was on the spot to answer the consequence. Why then should these things trouble Capt. Bu-n's mind, about events which took place more than ten

years

years ago, and the person I then married has lain in her silent grave near five years?

Thus the discerning reader may perceive I have borrowed a precedent for the regulation of my conduct in my Second Marriage, from the antient scriptures; which precedent is recorded in the unchanging laws of the Persians and Medes; and the Apostle tells us, whatever was written afore-time, either by Solomon or any other profit, was written for our Learning and Imitation; and, if the subject of our present enquiry is taken notice of by the writers of the Old Testament, and confirmed by one of the ablest writers of the New, I think I have the highest and the most indisputable warrant and authority for my procedure; and it is my invariable belief, that if the Husband and Wife wilfully and deliberately execute a Deed of Separation, or if the Wife of my own choice and desire can resolutely execute a deed of Separation or Divorce from her Husband *for life*, it must have more weight with every discerning person, than if all the *Law-givers* upon earth were to sign a bill of Divorce *for them*, without their mutual consent and hand-writing.—And they who have never heard, nor examined the statutes of our *national laws*, who are furnished with the law of God in their heart, and in their mind, it will teach them to regulate their conduct in such cases of conscience, and it will serve to direct them instead of other helps, where the case seems dark and intricate; and, if a Brother or a Sister is not in Bondage in such cases, he or she must be at liberty to marry, in my opinion.

If any of my readers think I haye carried my ideas too far on this subject, I shall not be offended with them, nor shall any receive a check from my pen on that account; I am not inclined to dispute with any on this *tenet*, it may be admitted or refused, men may embrace either side of the question; I speak

speak not by commandment, but by permission; Let every man be persuaded in his own mind: Nor should I ever have touched upon this *critical* subject if I could have avoided it.

Perhaps as I profess to be a Theologist, it will be expected that I offer some theological Remarks on the Apostle Paul's *attestations*; and to gratify the reader I will, for the Apostle's warrant for my procedure is unexceptionable and indisputable. *If the unbelieving depart let him depart, a brother or a sister is not in bondage in such cases.* The Apostle Paul was a person of no inferior mould, he was master of languages, both human and divine; he understood the law as well as the gospel, and had his tuition under *Ramaliel*, a Doctor of Law, therefore he must be a competent judge of the letter of the law. And in the passage before me he speaks with a positive assurance, that the *deserted* person is not in bondage; and if a *Brother* or *Sister* is not in bondage in such a case, they must be *free*, for there is no medium between *bondage* and *liberty*: it is as much as if the Apostle had said, the privilege of *deserted* persons is like the *birth-right* of the *first-born*, it must be, or not be; for, if a person is not in *bondage* he must be *free*, it must be done or undone; the *deserted* person must be either in *bondage* or at *liberty*; and, according to my idea of the sacred text, the inspired penman could not mistake; for, if they are not in *bondage* they must be at perfect *liberty* to marry again; and if the *deserted* person was not *free* in such *cases*, then the Apostle must be under a mistake; and it would appear like a contradiction in terms, or like speaking of *dark Sun-shine*, or of a *round Square*, which is contrary to the rules of right reason.

I cannot help thinking, but there are many conscientious, upright persons, who will not *scruple* to acquiesce with my Remarks, I admit it is a melancholy situation, and it is what ought to be avoided as much as possible, for it is a matter of the greatest importance

portance in this life; and a long and painful experience from younger days, has taught me the sorrowful effects of it. And declare, I would rather receive and embrace a stranger, than person who, after marriage, could deliberately depart from me; for, I think, *desertion* and a wilful departure after marriage, is not only a violation of the marriage oath, but it is a sin of the same nature as Adultery or Fornication; if the *act* differs the *offence* the same. I hope none of my readers will imagine that I countenance the doctrine of the *Nicolaists*, which I hate; and the earnest advice to the unmarried is, that they take heed that they be not unequally yoked.

For if the cruel fetter bind

The gentle with the Savage mind,

Farewell all hope, of dear delight,

And earthly pleasure takes its flight.

But, on the contrary, where two kindred souls are made intimately one in the harmonious bonds of marriage, where there mutual love, there will be harmony, and mutual delight; they will be partners in *fiduci*, and sharers in each others cares and consolations; and neither sickness nor poverty will divide or separate their affections, they will not leave nor forsake each other, till the enemy Death gives the awful parting stroke, and dissolves the Marriage Bond. — For my part, I can only form a faint idea of the happy state. I have been deprived the pleasure and satisfaction of what the philosophers call *delicate society*, which imparts my conceptions to describe. Happy are they who are equally yoked, who are not only made one by marriage, and of one spirit, but are one in the Lord; as were Zacharias and Elizabeth.

Thus I have finished my Remarks on Bondage and Liberty, relative to Marriage; and I hope I have not offended any who differ in their sentiments in this particular from me, as I shall not offend with them. And that I may not close my last Number in anger with my Accusers, nor with any disgusting expression though I have been angry with them, mine anger is turned away, and I would rather leave a sweet favour on the reader's mind, than Cpt. Burn's mind, and on the mind of all my Accusers,

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THE END.

